



# BIA Horizons

## ***Principal's Message- Dr. Talat Sultan***

*Alhamdulillah*, in spite of Hurricane Sandy and the worst flu epidemic in years, *BIA Newsletter* has continued its publication. The credit primarily goes to its vigilant editor and her students! With the dedication of its staff, BIA recovered rather fast from these two natural disasters. The classes are being held regularly in accordance with the plans submitted to the principal and on-line to the parents.

The most outstanding event of the last quarter was the BIA International Cultural Fair organized by the students, teachers, and parents

jointly. Special booths were set up by all of the fifteen groups of diversified national origin representing their homeland at BIA. Delicious food was served at each booth along with a colorful and informative program, often accompanied by a video for satisfying each and every aesthetic sense. All segments of the school population greatly admired and appreciated this innovative event; the first expanded version of our traditional International day program.

The inauguration of a Boys Scout program at BIA was also a salient event during this period. The program

will go a long way in developing the leadership and social service abilities of our students.

The second half of the year at our school is always much more hectic with numerous activities; like the poetry competition, Science Olympiad, Science Fair, Spelling Bee, Islamic Debate, Model UN, Islamic Quiz, an Athletic Competition, the Annual Fund Raising Dinner, and of course our Annual Function. Let's pray that all these activities will be most productive and beneficial. (Ameen).

Enlightening Your Life

# Culture Fair- A Festival of Colors by Rahma Shata

Think about your everyday activities; whether it be running, reading, eating; your culture most probably effects the activities you participate in. Food and clothes are two of the most common ways our culture effects us. We gathered in our second home to appreciate and recognize different cultures. One of the most fun and amazing activities Baytul Iman has hosted, although other events were almost as great.

Everyone was active on that day. We got to go around the world in about an hour. Cultural clothes lit the room with their beauty and were even



## Cultural Influences

"In my opinion, the way a person is influenced isn't related to culture, but rather how others around that person act....if a person is from a foreign country and comes to the U.S., I believe that person will act like the group that he/she spends time with the most. That means that most of the time, people act like their family because they spend most of their time with them."

**-Omar Mbarki**

"Another influence that our culture has on us is our religion, Islam. Islam is more than just that; it's a way

being sold. Delicious, mouth watering food was provided. With all the kind-hearted people that participated, the children of BIA not only learned about culture, but also ethnicity.

Culture day was a day well spent. The smell of Biryani and Basamel filled the room, uniting our differences. Presentations by the young ones were delivered not only successfully, but also creatively and in an organized fashion. We heard songs by the children, moving almost everyone in the room. All in all, culture day was a success! I am so glad that I attended the fair, not only because I learned about everyone's culture, but about each culture's past too!



of life. Our religion influences us every day by the fact that we pray, fast, and have to be kind to others, even if we don't want to."

**-Musa Shaikh**

"What my culture does is shape my life. It affects my personality, my belief, and most importantly, who I am. ....The rainbow that colors my life is red, white, green, and blue."

**-Ayesha Yasir**

"I think my culture is more individual to the person I am because it is the

## (cont. "Cultural Influences")

"..country that my parents were born in. I have to care about my culture and celebrate the days that must be celebrated."

**-Jarif Hosen**

"I think that culture plays an extremely important role in our daily lives. For example, the way we dress, the food we eat, the language we speak are all dependent on our culture.."

**-Ridda Dadani**

"..Our culture depends on person to person and the way you take it in. Culture influences all of us in different ways. It might influence (x) person in one way and the (y) person in another."

**-Zonera Hashmi**

"My cultures have affected me by making me feel like a totally different person. For instance, I speak two languages, unlike if I had only one culture. The same goes for habits, religion, food, knowledge, etc. "

**-Hamdi Lababidi**

"My legendary thirty-four dollar reebok running shoes that I frantically bought on a sale at Macy's, multi-hued Aeropostale blouses, and marvelous DRE headphones can hint to almost anything, if you are an outsider. I grew up in America, but was born in Egypt. I lived in Egypt for the first one and a half years of my life. Although I know being a foreigner in America makes people very racist against you, I would still declare "I am an American," instead of "Egyptian-American". I'd way rather say that I am a "MUSLIM-AMERICAN."

**-Rahma Shata**

"Our culture influences our life in many ways. Yes, we do add American characteristics to our original culture. It is a more broader spectrum of color in our life. American culture influences me in a lot of things."

**-Saif Syed**



**"Cultural Influences" cont. from pg. 2**

"Diverse; this word can describe the whole human population. This world is a mixture of all types of cultures, traditions, and religions. The way I see it is like this, this world is a big fruit basket; and each fruit represents a culture. I believe our culture does have a big part in molding us into who we are. I am a Pakistani Muslim and I live in the U.S.A. This big fact about me can change my future and myself in many ways....Everyday this world is changing and new things are being added to our culture, but it's up to us to still follow the traditions that our ancestors have passed down to us. We may mix our cultures and learn all about other ones, but we have to keep our old ones too."

**-Afreen Bakht**

"Culture has a significant affect on us. It affects who we are and how we live. It also affects how we dress and talk. My culture is especially shown on Eid, we eat a special kind of food that is eaten only on that day. We insist that ever summer we go to Tunisia, and buy traditional clothes and other souvenirs that remind us about our culture."

**-Maram Ayadi**

"In my opinion, Pakistani culture is like sauce on my food. It adds a little spice in my life. I enjoy wearing Kameez-Shalwar, as well as eating Haleem, gravy, and dal with my white rice."

**-Sana Faysal**

"Culture and society are not exactly universally flattering when wedged hand in hand. Although, when adopting coping mechanisms and demonstrating ourselves in the culture to which we are born in, the fusion of the two are valued universally. I certainly agree with the idea of one's lifestyle being dictated somewhat by culture. How

much? Well, it all depends on how someone takes different things and adopts them their OWN ways. One's situations, personal surroundings, and obviously diverse religion and culture all contribute to lifestyle. Of course, being born and raised/raising in the U.S, my family and I have learnt to cooperate and cope with our environment. Therefore, people in America insert their American characteristics to be able to live due to the conditions in their surroundings while still retaining their culture. I believe that culture is individual to the person we are since different people have their OWN views and perspectives on things and have different priorities which they have to get straight one way or another. My culture keeps me within limits or boundaries while still allowing me to infuse some differences it. I honestly put forth great effort toward balancing the two, while still being moderately fair to both."

**-Iman Khalil**

"Manners are important in a Pakistani culture because they reflect what your parents have taught you. If you show bad manners in front of someone else they will think that your parents have taught you nothing.... wherever we live it affects everything we do (including our culture). I believe that culture is individual to the person that we are. I believe this because everyone has a different culture. Every person shows their culture to a certain extent. The way we show our culture is how we show our personality and everyone's personality is different. In conclusion, culture affects everyone and no one person's culture is the same. "

**-Saad Farooq**





## ***An Act of Kindness- Heroism in its most Luminous Form by Rahma Shata***

My dad had just left for Hajj for a whole month, when we heard of the imminent Hurricane Sandy. My neighbor immediately came to the rescue. Despite the little room she had, and the busy schedule she follows, she managed to set up her whole basement for my family and me to take refuge in. She helped us tape the windows in our house, evacuate, and move over to her home for the night that the hurricane hit our shore. We were pleasantly surprised to find that she had even cooked a whole feast. She also took into account our comfort, and asked her husband to go to his brother's house while we were there. I palpably see my neighbor's act as a heroic act of valor. Not only was my neighbor able to quell my mother's dreadful fears, but she also kept us in good hands. I can't ever thank her enough for that.

Author Nora Ibrahim writes "the best really does come out of people in times of need." These stories are ones we should circulate. When times are bad and most people "haul tail it out", not to mention rightfully so; these types of women and men are heroes because they face trial head on and risk themselves to put other's safety and comfort ahead of their own. Yes, Hurricane Sandy posed a real threat to anyone in its path, but the folks that dare to try to serve others are the ones who wouldn't move out of the way. Acts such as these inspire others to observe the positive facets of life, and follow suit, by "paying" the kind act "forward".

The major lesson we must concur is that of optimism and gratitude. After this hurricane, a sudden rush of energy runs down my spine, pushing me to conceive altruistic acts for ordinary people no matter any cataclysmic occurrence. It has made me thankful that there are still good souls out there. My neighbor's simple act of heroic kindness gives me an aspiration to follow in her footsteps on the path to philanthropy serving the human race.

*Speaking of Heroic acts of kindness:  
Stressing that one not need do an  
act that requires one to "fly to the  
rescue" to be heroic, I would like to  
thank all students who wrote notes,  
made cards, and sent condolences  
for the victims, and families of vic-  
tims, of the Newtown, Conn. tragedy.  
It makes me proud to be serving in a  
community that reaches out to oth-  
ers in their time of sorrow and of-  
fers a "shoulder to cry on." Jazakal-  
lah Khayran again to Br. Mohammad  
Mohiuddin and Sr. Fatima Sultana  
for hand delivering our messages to  
Sandy Hook Elementary.*

**-Ambreen Ahmad**



## ***Haiku: Inspiration in Nature***

Lava flows downhill  
Destroying all of its path  
Indestructible  
**-Jarif Hosen**

Frosty pearls bleeding  
Luminescent moon bleached stones  
Maple leaves, oak seeds.  
**-Iman Khalil**

Many winds blowing  
Leaves in different colors  
Making me Happy.  
**-Maram Ayadi**

Stars are a great sight  
Shining so bright in the night  
Looks like they're moving.  
**-Jarif Hosen**



# Writer's Corner

Melodies of Festivity  
Ring around  
the corner.

Ice skating upon the frozen,  
Glistening lake.

All of us cuddle around  
The cozy, illuminated  
Fireplace.

After loads of snowballs and  
Sledding, warm hot Cocoa  
Awaits at  
Home.

No other joy can  
Beat the jubilant  
Feeling of  
Winter.  
-Afreen Bakht

## Ten Years Later...

I am walking down an empty street in New York City. The city is now one of the poorest cities in the world, extremely the opposite of what it was 10 years ago; when I was a kid. Unemployed people begging for money everywhere. I wish I could give them something, but I myself am looking for a job. It's almost Christmas, but no one really cares because they don't have the money to buy anything. It's a miracle that these people survive, considering the economy here. As I pass Macy's, I remember the lively horde of people that would normally be there. Now it's empty. There's barely two to three employees there. I can't spot a single of those food carts whose food I couldn't resist when I was small. I see an old man carrying a sign that says "I am the 99.9999999999%."

I then remember the "Occupy Wall Street Movement," when the 99% held rallies against the 1%. Today this 1% has become the 0.000000001% and owns 95% of the country's wealth not 42% like it was back in my day. As I am crossing the street, I see an overflowing garbage dumpster. I am guessing it has probably been at least a month since the last time the garbage truck came. As I continue, I see the Rockefeller Center. My eyes immediately search for the beautiful and bright tree that would normally stand big and tall in front of the center. Instead, I find a huge abandoned plaza. It is now that I wish that of all the inventions people made, why couldn't someone invent a time machine?

-Ridda Dadani

## Grandmother's Lamentation

By Rahma Shata

It didn't require scrupulous observations or copious times of being in your presence,  
For anyone to recognize the paradigm you.

Your potent grace and equanimity were so perfectly concurring with your unflagging energy;

The sun would grin to see you awake, and the moon would happily light your nights,  
Because the sun, the moon, and even the air surrounding you,

All appraise you to be an impeccable inspiration to our people- Young and Old.

You've taught me patience, endurance, humility;

Compassion, pride, and checked ambition.

You were illiterate...numbers and letters were obstinately arcane to you,

Yet the wisdom of the world always manifested itself in your every utter of words.

The thought of me just writing this now...wounds me,

It mercilessly slaps me with the harsh reality that I must accept,

But I will always remind myself;

That your delicate self is in a *better place now*;

In our Lord's Most Highest Promised Heaven,

Ineffably prepared for a soul like yours.

My sister, my mother, my friend, and confidante- my *grandmother*,

I promise to never lose hope in reuniting in Paradise.

## **Students' Debates- Smoking Gun**

*Massacres are becoming routine. I never thought I would write that sentence, but there it is taunting me, bringing all my worries to a climactic brink; worry for the future of my children and the safety of my loved ones. The fathers of this nation guaranteed certain unalienable rights, and among those rights is the right to bear arms. This right guaranteed every American citizen the right to buy weapons for protection, sport, or even in defense of the country. Many argue that this right was put into place during a time when no national army existed, so a state based INDIVIDUAL militia was necessary for the protection and sovereignty of the state. Since, this is no longer an issue, proponents of harsher gun control laws say that we must "adjust" the right to bear arms. Opponents of gun control laws argue that regardless of the prerequisite for the amendment, it exists and should be protected at all costs. They also argue that more gun control laws punish law abiding citizens, while massacres and crimes are committed by criminals who are not affected by such laws. The Sixth Graders of BIA were especially affected by the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. After sending their condolences via Br. Mohammad Mohiuddin and Sr. Fatima Sultana (Jazakallah Khayran!), they decided to debate on this hot topic. After our students' had debated passionately on the subject, reality decided their argument for them. On January 16th, 2013 President Obama did pass gun control laws implementing universal background checks as well as bans on assault weapons and ammunition clips holding more than 10 bullets. I hope Insha'Allah that these laws lead us towards a future for our children, and our children's children, free of tragedy. Ameen. -Ambreen Ahmad*

### **Pro:**

"There should be more gun control laws because people should be held responsible for the guns they buy. For example, then parents would be more responsible about leaving a gun out because their child can access the gun and create 'a bloody scene'. Also, it has been proven that the presence of a gun on a victim during a robbery makes the robbery more dangerous. It makes the thief, or criminal, more likely to commit a violent crime, rather than one where only money or valuables are stolen. Just last year, 14,000 people got killed by a gun in Chicago alone. Instead of using guns to protect their property, people can use guard dogs to stop criminals."

**-Yusra Ul-Haq**

"The second amendment, the one that people against gun control laws always mention guarantees their right to own guns, actually only allows the right to bear arms for those in state militia. The law doesn't state that guns, especially mass assault weapons, could be used freely to do whatever you wanted with them. So, actually there is no right protecting the type of guns and—

**-Jarif Hosen**

The second amendment was written in the Constitution at a time when there was no national army. Then, the state militia was needed to protect our borders from invaders. Now that we have county police, state police, and a national army; why would we need a right guaranteeing guns to a state militia?"

**-Maram Ayadi**

"A person should have a real reason to own a gun, not just to 'have it'. It is not a toy, and there should be limits put on it for private use. You should not take away my right to live happy, free, and without worry about violence in order to maintain your 'right to bear arms'."

**-Sumaiyya Ramadani**

### **Con:**

"My right to own a gun keeps me protected in times of trouble. If someone is in an unsafe place, a gun can and will save their life."

**-Ayesha Yasir**

"We need to stop spending time and money talking about gun control laws, or trying to make gun control laws. Instead, we need to make more mental hospitals, or fix our mental care programs, so that the—

—se insane people doing these insane things can be stopped."

**Musa Shaikh**

"More guns are used for the purposes of protection not for committing mass killings. If the teachers at Sandy Hook, or a security guard at Sandy Hook, had had a gun, all those kids wouldn't have died. They would have stopped the bad guy, and no one would have had to be killed, not even the one who had planned to."

**-Sarah Faysal**

"Gun control laws punish HONEST citizens. Criminals are called criminals because they don't follow the law. So, what is making more gun control laws going to do to those criminals? NOTHING. Criminals will find and get guns like they always do; illegally!"

**-Lahraib Amin**

**We want your Opinion! Who do you think made the stronger argument: Pro/For or Con/Against?**

**Please email us at De-b8BIA@gmail.com with your responses!**



## ***Honoring Martin Luther King Jr./African American History Month***

“Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equality for people of different races at a time when many people were unable to enjoy many rights due to their race. While this was going on in America, Islam had already declared the fact that ALL people had the same origin and were made from the same material, hundreds of years ago. In Surat-ul-Nisaa Ayah number 1, Allah (SWT) says “O Mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and he created from it, its mate, and from them both he created many men and women.” In another place He mentions “O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and female, and made you into nations, so that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.” Here we understand that the most honored person is not the one from a certain race, but rather the one who is best in character. This is similar to what King said in his “I have a Dream” speech. He said, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” The only difference is that while the Quran emphasizes equality between races, it also emphasizes on fearing Allah (SWT) and believing in Him at the same time. A person can have an impressive character and not believe in any God, yet other people may not be aware of what he/she is doing. Only one that fear Allah knows that Allah is watching, and this person will hesitate, no REFRAIN, from doing something against morality or the word of God.

Martin Luther King Jr. chose to present his ideals through civil disobedience. While the Quran does say to bear arms the first ayah carrying this order was in fact revealed after the migration of the Prophet (SAW), only because of all the pain that Muslims had suffered at the hands of the Quraish. This ayah in Suratul Hajj states, “Permission to fight against the disbelievers has been given to those who have been fought against, because they have been OPPRESSED.” In Makkah though, the Prophet and the believers were not allowed to bear arms even in self-defense due to the fact that the Muslims were very few in number compared to the mighty Quraish. In this situation, the Prophet (SAW) and his companions did practice civil disobedience. For example, many of the Prophet’s companions refused to give up their faith even after being severely beaten and tortured. They remained persistent and determined. In the end their patience paid off and they became amongst those favored by Allah (SWT). The way you deal with your struggle depends on your circumstances. Martin Luther King Jr. knew that arms were not the answer. I would like to conclude with a Hadeeth of the Prophet stating “If one of you sees oppression then he should stop it with his hands, if not then, with his tongue, and if not then he should at least believe in his heart that it is wrong.”

**-Ridda Dadani**

“‘I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.’ These were the words of Martin Luther King Jr. while he stood in front of everyone on August 28, 1963 while delivering his dream speech. Back in the day, black and white did not get treated equally. The African Americans had to go to a different school, go on a different bus, and even drink from a different water fountain. Martin Luther King Jr. led many protests, and gave many speeches to end segregation and even though he was assassinated, its because of him today that people are being treated equally and being able to go to the same school and have the same rights as white people. The ideals of MLK Jr. are similar to what Islam says. In the Quran, Allah says “O Mankind! Most certainly, it is We (God almighty) who have Created you all from a single (pair) of a male and a female. And it is we who have made you into nations and tribes, that ye may recognize each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is (He who is) the most righteous of you.”( Qur’an 49:13) This ayah just further explains that it doesn’t matter what race or color you are, in front of Allah’s eyes the noblest one is the one who does the right deeds. Allah also mentions in the Quran “And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations. In your languages and your colors; verily in that are Signs for those who know. ” (Qur’an 30:22) Also the method which MLK Jr. employed, instead of causing a riot and protesting in the middle of the street like the Occupy Wall Street movement, was also Islamic; MLK Jr. actually protested but in a very civilized way. In Islam you are allowed to protest for what you believe in but one must not turn such protests into riots by destroying shops, property, or harming others or engage in any other un-Islamic acts and that’s exactly what MLK Jr. did. He showed that you don’t have to cause a riot to get what you want. If you are patient and protest the peaceful way then you will get what you want. In conclusion, MLK Jr. did do the Islamic thing while making his dream come true and we should look up to him because he is the reason that made us what we are today: a united Ummah.”

**-Fatima Gohar**

“Whenever I listen to or read Martin Luther king Jr.’s “dream” speech, it reminds me of Rasoolallaah (SAW)’s sermon on the occasion of Hajjatul wadaa. Martin Luther King Jr. used to speak for equal rights for African Americans and the whites. In his dream speech, MLK spoke about a society in which people of all colors and races enjoyed same rights and social equality and justice. Our beloved Prophet (SAW) in his sermon gave us the principals for a just society; in which no white has superiority over a black nor a black has superiority over a white. Same way, no Arab has a superiority over a non Arab, nor any non Arab has superiority over an Arab.

In the first verse of Surah An-Nisa, Allah (SWT) says “Oh people , be fearful of your lord who has created you ALL from ONE man and woman, who was also created from him, and spread from them both many men and woman (all over the world) but He loves those who are most fearful of Him.” This verse proves that people of all the races, colors, and genders are equal in the eyes of Allah. In verse 135 of Surat An-Nisa, Allah says “oh you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice witnesses from Allah, even if it be against yourselves or your parents and relatives-whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both...”

Martin Luther king Jr. used a non violent approach to achieve his dreams. This means that instead of violence and the use of weapons, he would make peaceful protests. His ideal was Gandhi. Gandhi also led a peaceful movement of independence in India. Gandhi’s role model was our beloved Rasoolallaah (saws) . He along with his companions preached Islam peacefully in Makkah. They faced torture and persecution, but his choice was never violence. When he and his companions migrated to Madina, he established brotherhood among the Muhajireen and the Ansaar. He established a society based on Islamic principles of equality, brotherhood, justice, and peace. Such a society was also the dream of Martin Luther King Jr.”

### ***-Sarah Faysal***

“Allah (S.W.T.) says in Surat Al-Hujurat, (verse 13), “O Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is he who has most Taqwa among of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” With this verse, Islam declares equality among people, that is because Islam respects a human for being a human not for any other reason; Islam does not distinguish between two races, or two groups of people, or between two colors, and the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) addressed the people suggesting that concept during the last pilgrimage, saying: “O People! Your God is one; your father is one; no preference of an Arab neither over non-Arab nor of a non-Arab over an Arab or red over black or black over red except for the most righteous. Verily the most honored of you is the most righteous.” Another example of Islam’s appreciation for diversity comes from one of the Prophet Muhammad’s Sahaba (closest companions) named Bilal ibn Rabah (Radiallahu Anhu). Bilal was of Ethiopian origin and grew up as a slave in Mecca during the Jahiliyyah (Days of Ignorance), a period of severe hardship and oppression. In this instance, Bilal exemplified self-control and nonviolent resistance, two hallmarks of the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr.’s movement. Rather than physically fighting back against the slaver-owners, Bilal relied on his strength of will in order to survive the hardship. His firm dedication to Islam earned him both his freedom and his status as one of the first Sahaba of the Prophet. Indeed, he demonstrated to Muslims that any person (regardless of race or education) was capable of great personal faith. Indeed, the Prophet judged Bilal “not by the color of his skin, but by the content of his character” (quoted by Martin Luther King). Therefore, Martin Luther King Day is a great opportunity for Muslims to rediscover the importance of diversity within the Islamic tradition.”

### ***-Maram Ayadi***